

X
*The Observance of the Sanitary Laws, Divinely appointed,
in the Old Testament Scriptures, sufficient to ward
off Preventable Diseases from Christians as well as
Israelites.*

A S E R M O N

PREACHED

IN THE CATHEDRAL,
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ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 30TH, 1854.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES RICHSON, M.A.,

CLERK IN ORDERS.

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W I T H N O T E S

BY

JOHN SUTHERLAND, M.D.,

Of the General Board of Health, London.

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P R E F A C E .

IN revising the following Sermon for the press, I have thought it desirable to introduce many of the Texts, to which, when it was preached, I merely referred. This has necessarily increased its length.

The valuable Notes added by Dr. SUTHERLAND will, I am sure, give that real importance to the production, which the kindness of my friends, who requested its publication, led them to attribute to the Sermon itself.

C. R.



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A S E R M O N .

2 SAMUEL, *ch.* xxiv. *v.* 14.

“AND DAVID SAID UNTO GAD, I AM IN A GREAT STRAIT: LET US FALL NOW INTO THE HAND OF THE LORD; FOR HIS MERCIES ARE GREAT: AND LET ME NOT FALL INTO THE HAND OF MAN.”

THE circumstances which brought David into the “strait,” to which allusion is here made, are familiar to every reader of Holy Scripture. Making flesh his arm and confiding in the number of his people, King David directed Joab the captain of the host (*v.* 2), “Go, now, through all the tribes of Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.” But no sooner had the command been obeyed, than “Gad, David’s seer,” was sent to him (*v.* 11) with a message from the Lord, declaring how great punishment awaited him for the sin he had committed, and that either famine or pestilence or the sword should visit his people (*v.* 12).

The choice of these afflictions was graciously permitted to himself; and now, although too late, convinced that he had acted foolishly, he exclaims, as in our text, “I am in a great strait; let us fall into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.”

The judgments, which, at this time, were impending over the Jewish people, are such as are declared by the Holy Ghost, to be the special agents which God from time to

time employs for the punishment and correction of nations. "Thus saith the Lord" by his Prophet Jeremiah (xxix. 17) "I will send upon them the sword, the famine and the pestilence;" and again by Ezekiel (xiv. 21) "I send MY FOUR SORE JUDGMENTS upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast." But a distinction may be made, as the words of King David point out, between those afflictions, which, as Famine and Pestilence, proceed more apparently from the hand of God, and those, which, as War, are committed more immediately into the hands of men. And, indeed, in respect to war itself, it should be observed, that its character as a scourge rather affects the people by whose misconduct it has been occasioned, than those, in whatever degree they suffer, who, in the dispensation of Providence, are the chosen agents for accomplishing the Divine will.

Now, brethren, we ourselves know something, by experience, of the sufferings induced by scourges of this character. In 1832 and again in 1849, the pestilence of *Cholera* visited our land; in 1847 *Scarcity*, which in Ireland became *Famine*, with its attendant *Fever*, destroyed its thousands of our population; and in the present year, the horrors of WAR and the revisiting of PESTILENCE stand like angels of destruction with their swords drawn in their hands, only waiting the bidding of Almighty God to stay with desolation that religious, moral, intellectual, physical, and social progress of our people, which their present condition most urgently demands. At such a crisis, therefore, seeing it is revealed in Holy Scripture that war and pestilence are afflictions proceeding from the hand of God, it is evidently our duty to "search the Scriptures," to learn, if possible, how we may avert these threatened calamities; and as the former of these afflictions has been so recently* and properly the subject of national

* April 26th, 1854.

humiliation and reflection, we may confine our consideration to the latter upon the present occasion.

“ When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language” (*Ps. cxiv. 1*) one of the first promises that was made to them was this, “ If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, *I will put none of these diseases upon thee*, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (*Ex. xv. 26; Deut. vii. 15*).

And shortly afterwards, even more expressly “ The Lord your God shall bless thy bread and thy water; and *I will take SICKNESS away from the midst of thee*” (*Ex. xxiii. 25*).

From which it appears, that conditionally on obeying the Divine will, a promise was given to the children of Israel, that not only should they be preserved from the scourge of PESTILENCE, but that *all that class of diseases*, usually described as “ *preventable*,” should be wholly unknown among them; and this promise, I wish you particularly to observe, was made, not in connection with any miraculous interference, but only on condition, that the COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD should be duly obeyed.

The Mosaic Institutions, although divinely adapted to a transition period and a peculiar people, embodied Laws of an immutable character, as well as others, of a merely typical design. Of the former class were such as affect the physical and moral well-being of mankind; and of the latter such as realized the primeval promise of a Saviour, and the development of the offices and objects of his future mission. All these institutions were, however, more or less mixed up with an imposing and unrelaxing ceremonial, admirably adapted to the circumstances and condition of the people to whom they were addressed; and the vast importance of their minute observance was enforced by the awful solemnity with which they were

originally delivered, and the special means, Divinely appointed, for keeping them continually in remembrance.

Accordingly we find that when the Two Tables of Stone, containing a summary of the sacred will, written by the Finger of God, were given to Moses (*Ex.* xix. 16; xxxi. 18; *Deut.* ix. 10), “so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (*Heb.* xii. 21). And, lest the people should imagine that this summary only was all that God intended to be of permanent obligation, it was declared in the Second Commandment that God would show himself merciful only to those who “kept his Commandments,” which (as a comparison of *Ex.* xx. 5, 6 or *Deut.* vi. 2 with *Ex.* xxiii. 24, 25; *Deut.* viii. 11 or *Deut.* xxvi. 18, and *Dan.* ix. 4 to 6, will show), comprised all the precepts and statutes and judgments, which the Lord delivered unto the people by his immediate inspiration.

To give, however, the greatest possible effect to that awful scene, which occurred in the delivery of the Law upon Mount Sinai, the people were forewarned of its approach and prepared for its solemnities. They were pledged also to obey the Divine will (*Ex.* xix. 8); “All that the Lord hath spoken,” say they, “we will do;” or, to quote their more emphatic declaration on another occasion, “All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient” (*Ex.* xxiv. 3, 7).

Moreover, to remind the children of Israel of their peculiar obligations to obey the Divine will, it was enacted as a Law, that Prayers of inspired composition (*Deut.* xxvi. 5 to 10, and 12 to 15) should be used in the offering of First-Fruits and Tithes; also that the whole of the Law should be read to the people at prescribed periods (*Deut.* xxxi. 10, 11); and that “All the words of this Law” should be written upon certain plastered stones, which, that their contents might never be forgotten, were to be fixed in the vicinity of the altar (*Deut.* xxvii. 1 to 10); and besides all this, God’s mercy and vengeance were set forth in a Divine Song, not to be

“forgotten out of the mouth of their seed” for ever (*Deut.* xxx. and xxxi.)

The sacred precepts were to be made the subjects of earliest instruction; to be used as signs upon the hands and frontlets between the eyes; and to be written upon the posts of the houses and upon the gates (*Deut.* vi. 7 to end). Judges and officers were appointed to enforce obedience to the minutest details (*Deut.* xvi. 18 to 20; xvii. 8 to 13); the severest curses were denounced against a disregard of the Divine will (*Lev.* xviii. 29; xxvi. 14 to end; *Deut.* viii. 11, 19; xxviii. 15, &c.); and it was expressly enjoined that the children of Israel should “make fringes in the borders of their garments, and put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue, that *they might look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them*” (*Num.* xv. 38 to 40).

Thus every thing that could, with propriety, be adopted, was introduced under the holiest sanctions to keep the Divine commandments in the memory of the Israelites; to show the importance of those commandments in the Divine mind; and to leave the people without excuse, if, as the consequence of disobedience, they failed to realize the advantages which were offered them in the inspired promises.

Foremost, then, among these promised advantages, I have already said, was this, that the whole class of preventable diseases, and every kind of pestilential visitation should, not miraculously, but as a necessary result, be wholly unknown among the children of Israel. And if this be so, how important is it that we endeavour to ascertain, for our practical guidance in seeking to obtain the like advantages for ourselves, what are the statutes and commandments of Divine institution that related *to the avoidance of bodily affliction, and the maintenance of physical health.*

Undoubtedly first in order, even as affecting the health of the body, we must place all those injunctions which relate to

a serious, regular and faithful observance of the services of the Temple; the spiritual and ceremonial worship of the one True God; and a due attention to the moral laws, and the peculiar social polity which the Holy Scriptures enjoin. And I assign this position to commandments and institutions of such a character, because it scarcely admits of doubt, that wherever religious and moral obligations are disregarded, the mind is more easily discomposed, and a course of life likely to be pursued which eventually, acting upon the system of the nerves, proves itself prejudicial to the physical health; whereas, when they are duly respected, as piety, and a proper sense of duty dictate, they not only encourage a joyful anticipation of the eternal bliss, but their habitual observance so tranquillizes the feelings amidst worldly anxieties, and keeps the affections, passions and desires under proper check, that it constantly preserves that happy buoyancy of mind and spirit, which is both the surest evidence of the Divine favour, and the best preparative for bodily health (*Deut. xii. 11, 12*).

And this premised, we find that the Institutions and Laws, which, for the immediate preservation of physical health, the Holy Spirit deemed it worthy of his direct agency and inspiration to prescribe, were the following;—

I. The conviction was to be established, as a deep-rooted principle of primary importance, influencing the mind and every action and relationship of life, that the children of Israel were a holy people, and that *every thing causative of uncleanness must be shrunk from with abhorrence* (*Lev. v. 2, 3; vii. 20, 21; xx. 26; Num. xix. 11 to end; Deut. xxiii. 14*).

II. The people were to be taught to consider that the greatest temporal blessing they could desire at the hand of Almighty God, was the possession of a land, rich in farinaceous

and other vegetable productions, and abundant in the supply of the purest water (*Deut.* viii. 6 to 11 ; xi. 13 to 15).

III. The deterioration of race, by the intermarriages of close kindred, was to be strictly avoided (*Lev.* xviii., &c.).

IV. In respect to the selection of Food ;—a distinction was to be made between Fish and Flesh and Fowl, described as clean or unclean* (*Lev.* xi. 1, &c. ; xx. 25, 26 ; *Deut.* xiv. 3, &c.).

* The reason why the flesh of certain animals was to be used as food, and the flesh of certain other animals rejected, must be sought for, not only in the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of these, but also in the relations which the classes of animals bore to the social circumstances of the people.

Certain kinds of flesh are known to be injurious if eaten in particular climates ; and hence the disuse of such food among certain nations and races. Diseases of the digestive organs, but especially of the skin, are known to arise from the continued use of such flesh. But to judge of the propriety of the prohibition in all its bearings it is necessary to go further ; and one illustration will be sufficient.

The eating of pork is prohibited by the Mosaic law. It is one of those articles of food which cannot be used with impunity in a warm climate ; but this is not all. The breeding and rearing of swine is as injurious to health, and more injurious to social habits than eating their flesh ; so much so, that a simple enactment prohibiting the use of swines' flesh as an article of food, if it could be carried out, would put an end to a great cause of disease and degradation in our large cities and towns, even if it were at the same time admitted that pork was perfectly wholesome food.

During the expurgations in anticipation of the cholera, it has happened that swine have been ejected from single rooms, which they inhabited along with the family, five or six flats above the street.

No fat of ox or sheep or goat, nor the blood of any animal (a law which was partly ceremonial, partly typical, and partly required by the temperature of the climate) was to be taken (*Lev.* iii. 17 ; vii. 23, 26, compared with *Deut.* xxxii. 14).

During the late fearful outbreak of cholera at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the authorities of Sunderland ejected from their town no fewer than 3,000 pigs, as a measure of precaution.

There is no conceivable advantage from the rearing of such a host of unclean animals amidst a population of 70,000, like that of Sunderland, which could counterbalance the disease, misery, and bad social habits, of which their presence in a town is an index, as well as a cause.

A very striking illustration, or rather experimental proof of the degradation arising from this cause is afforded by the case of a village called "The Potteries," situate in the parish of Kensington. It is, or rather was till recently, in the open country, and inhabited by a population of from 1,000 to 1,200 people, all engaged in the breeding and rearing of pigs. The pigs usually outnumbered the people 3 to 1; and had their styes mixed up with the dwelling-houses. In some cases they have been found even inside the houses, and under the beds. Let us now trace the result of this experiment: On the physical condition of the people; on their health; and on their moral condition.

The houses are described by the surveyor of the metropolitan commissioners of sewers as being, many of them, "mere hovels in a ruinous condition, generally densely peopled, filthy in the extreme, containing vast accumulations of offal, — the small gardens attached to some being purposely raised by this to a greater height." "The streets unpaved and full of ruts, the surface strewn with refuse of almost every conceivable description." "At all seasons in a most offensive and disgusting condition, emitting effluvia of the most nauseous character."

Next, as to the result to health. The ordinary deaths among the people are 40 in 1,000 per annum. In sickly seasons it rises to 60 in 1,000. Fever has attacked the population in the ratio of 128 in

No flesh torn of beasts in the field was to be eaten (*Ex.* xxii. 31; *Lev.* xxii. 8); or if such were eaten, the person who took it, was to “be unclean until the even” (*Lev.* xvii. 15).

No meat, in a state of decomposition, was to be considered fit for sacrifice or human food* (*Lev.* vii. 18; xix. 7; *Ex.* xxix. 34).

The cultivation of corn and its careful preparation for bread were rendered indispensable, by the laws affecting “offerings” (*Lev.* ii. 1, 14; xxiii. 9 to 16; *Num.* xv. 19, 20; xxviii. 29, &c.).

The importance of milk and honey as articles of food was intimated in the Divine promises (*Ex.* iii. 8; *Num.* xiii. 27; *Deut.* xxxii. 13).

the 1,000 in a single year. The deaths from cholera and diarrhœa amounted in 1849 to 21 in 1,000 inhabitants. No less than 80 per cent. of the entire mortality occurs amongst children under 15 years of age. Nearly all the inhabitants look sallow and unhealthy.

Lastly, as to the moral results. The Rev. W. H. Ibbotson says—“As a consequence of the physical degradation, the people are debased as to their morals, and obstinately refuse all improvement. He formerly spent much time in the locality, and his curate does so at present: but it is all in vain; the people love darkness as they love filth.”

The Hebrew legislator provided against the degradation which might have arisen among his people from the rearing of certain animals, by pronouncing them unclean, and prohibiting their use as food. If we had the same opportunity of observation in regard to all the prohibited animals as we have in regard to swine, we should doubtless obtain similar proofs of the wisdom of the prohibition.

* The wisdom of this prohibition, as a preservative against epidemic disease, is evidenced by the fact, that instances have occurred, even in this climate, of whole households having been seized with symptoms premonitory of cholera, from having partaken of putrid game, while an epidemic constitution of the atmosphere existed.

The duty of giving due attention to the preparation of plain food for the table, without the addition of stimulants, was taught in the commandments, which required at one time an offering to be roasted (*Ex. xii. 9; Deut. xvi. 7*); at another it should be boiled (*Lev. viii. 31*); and which so far sanctified the use of the oven, the girdle and the frying-pan (*Lev. ii. 4, 5, margin, 7; vii. 9 to 13*), as to connect them expressly by name with the preparation of the meat offerings; and which declared that one of the evidences of extreme luxury is the multiplication of women “as cooks, and confectionaries, and bakers” (*1 Sam. viii. 13*).

Finally, the importance of distinguishing the quality of food generally was insisted on, by the laws which prohibited the offering of any blemished animals in sacrifice (*Lev. xix. 7; xxii. 20, 22; Num. xxviii. 19, 31; Deut. xvii. 1*); and which required the selection of the best of the wheat and first fruits, for the use of the priest (*Num. xviii. 12, 29*).*

V. In regard to the application of water;—

I need scarcely remind you of its abundant use in the personal ablutions of the Israelites, both ceremonially and otherwise; nor of its general, if not exclusive use as beverage, during the forty years they journeyed in the wilderness.

In the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Moses was

* It will be observed that the higher kinds of farinaceous food, cereal grains, &c., are those which were brought prominently before the attention of the people, and doubtless this had a two-fold design. The food spoken of by the legislator is not only the most wholesome, but it requires the exercise of a large amount of human labour, foresight, and intelligence, in order to obtain it. There is no encouragement given to root eating, with its attendant laziness and listlessness. And, on the other hand, there is no encouragement given to luxury, as all the food mentioned, as well as the mode of preparation, are simple and wholesome in character.

directed to “wash them with water” (*Ex.* xxix. 4 ; xl. 12), and also to “make a laver of brass” that they might “wash their hands and feet, whenever they went into the Tabernacle of the congregation” (*Ex.* xxx. 17 to 21); and Moses did so; and adopted a like practice himself (*Ex.* xl. 30 to 32).

To provide the people abundantly with pure water, God not only led them to encampments in the neighbourhood of water (*Ex.* xv. 27), but even miraculously purified it, as at Marah (*Ex.* xv. 25), or produced it, as at Horeb, for their use (*Ex.* xvii. 6, 7 ; *Num.* xx. 7 to 11).

Bathing in water for the purification of the unclean (*Lev.* xv.; *Num.* 19 ; &c.) was frequently insisted upon.

The washing of clothes was an indispensable preparation for the acceptable service of Almighty God (*Ex.* xix. 10 ; *Lev.* xiii., xiv., xv. ; *Num.* xix.).

Certain parts of the sacrifices were to be washed before they could be offered (*Ex.* xxix. 17 ; *Lev.* viii. 21 ; *2 Chron.* iv. 6).

And to speak generally, the extent to which the use of water for promoting personal cleanliness was introduced may be inferred from the prayer of King David, “wash me and I shall be whiter than snow” (*Ps.* li. 7); and from the practice of complete personal washing, evidenced in the case of Bathsheba (*2 Sam.* xi. 2).

VI. As to temperance in the taking of beverage liable to intoxicate;—

Although the Jews were expressly permitted to drink wine and even “strong drink” (*Deut.* xiv. 26): and “strong wine” was directed to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering (*Num.* xxviii. 7); yet the offensiveness in the sight of God of any approach to intemperance was strongly impressed upon their minds;—

By the absolute prohibition of any kind of wine to the officiating priest, while performing the services of the Temple (*Lev.* x. 9).

By a like prohibition to the Nazarite, during the continuance of his vow (*Num.* vi. 3); the effect of whose discipline in respect to health of body is admirably described by Jeremiah (*Lam.* iv. 7).

By the authority given to the elders of a city to stone to death the disobedient son, convicted on the accusation of his parents, as “a glutton and a drunkard” (*Deut.* xxi. 20).

And especially by its being pointed out as a most flagrant evidence of apostacy, when in a literal, no less than the symbolical sense, a man should say, “I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart and add drunkenness to thirst” (*Deut.* xxix. 19).*

* There is perhaps no circumstance more striking during the prevalence of an epidemic condition of the atmosphere, than the frightful results which follow even a single act of drunkenness. At such periods men of the strongest constitutions have been as certainly destroyed by no unusual dose of intoxicating drink, as if they had swallowed poison. Even in towns where cholera has been carrying away its hundreds in a week, a decided increase of the deaths has been observed on Mondays and Tuesdays from the drunken revels of the preceding Saturday night and Sunday. It may be useful to mention as a warning, an occurrence of this kind which took place at a small mining village in Lanarkshire during the epidemic cholera of 1848-49. The people were all seen by the medical officer in perfect health on the evening of the 31st December, 1848: but they were “drinking in the new year.” Cholera swooped down upon them at midnight, and within twenty-four hours no fewer than forty cases and thirteen deaths had occurred; and such was the terror inspired by the event, that one man committed suicide by cutting his throat. After it began, the disease, in various degrees of severity, attacked 1,100 people out of 1,200 of which the population consisted; and notwithstanding the most active measures to arrest its progress, no fewer than ninety-four persons fell victims to its ravages, or rather to the detestable vice of drunkenness, of which it was an evident consequence.

VII. Concerning due attention to decency in apparel and sufficiency of clothing;—

I need only refer you to the particulars of dress Divinely prescribed to the priest in his ministrations at the altar (*Ex.* xx. 26; xxviii. 42-3);

To the express command that “the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment” (*Deut.* xxii. 5);

To the laws in respect to garments which leprosy or rot had marred (*Lev.* xiii. 47, &c.);*

* The “Law of the Leprosy” in textile and other fabrics appears to have been specially directed against the moral and physical evils arising from filthy personal and domestic habits. In our own climate discoloured spots, probably caused by minute cryptogamous plants, form readily on clothing which has been worn too long without washing, or which has been kept in damp or ill-aired places. The habit of wearing clothing of this kind is no unfrequent cause of disease among the poor. The fabric becomes saturated with organic matter from the skin, which matter ought to be removed from contact with the body as soon as possible, in place of being worn on it in the clothes for weeks or months. It is no unfrequent occurrence to see workpeople with wearing apparel in so filthy a condition, that the air around their bodies is always in a foul unwholesome state. They become in this way predisposed to disease.

According to the great fundamental principle of the Mosaic sanitary code, the very first appearance of the evil is made the signal for interference instead of waiting till health or life has suffered. Whenever the peculiar stain appeared, the Jewish priest caused the garment or other fabric, on which it had shown itself, to be shut up for seven days. In other words, he took effectual means to insure the discontinuance of its use. If it spread and became confirmed, the fabric was to be destroyed by fire, an operation which must have strongly arrested attention, and directed inquiry into the reason of such a proceeding. If, however, on

And to the absolute rule, that “if a man at all take his neighbour’s raiment to pledge, he shall, in any case, deliver it to him when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his raiment” (*Ex.* xxii. 26; *Deut.* xxiv. 13).

VIII. The physical exhaustion of the people, as the result of poverty or even punishment, was carefully guarded against;

Witness the provisions that the Hebrew who had been in servitude should not be allowed to “go away empty” (*Deut.* xv. 12 to 17);

That gleanings should be left for “the stranger, the fatherless and the widow” (*Deut.* xxiv. 19 to 22);

That every seven years “the creditor” should make a release; and that due assistance should not be withheld from a poor man, because the year of release might be at hand (*Deut.* xv. 1 to 11); and that every fiftieth year there should be a jubilee, when every man should return to his own profession (*Lev.* xxv. 10, &c.);

That the wages of a hired servant should not be kept from him until the morning (*Lev.* xix. 13; *Deut.* xxiv. 15);

That trees, whose fruits were available for human food, might not be destroyed even in a siege (*Deut.* xx. 19, 20);

That mill-stones were not allowed to be taken in pledge (*Deut.* xxiv. 6);

And that punishment by stripes should be limited to forty, lest their “brother should seem vile” unto them (*Deut.* xxv. 3).

washing a stained fabric the stain could be washed out, the operation was to be repeated a second time, after which the article was pronounced clean and fit for use.

It is hardly necessary to add, that the washing and burning of foul apparel and household linen is a common precaution in the present day against epidemic diseases, but as usual it is done *after* the disease has appeared, and not *before*, as was the case under the Jewish law.

IX. All refuse that could induce or localize infectious disease was, by the Divine command, to be immediately removed.*

The animals for sacrifice were to be slain in an open space (*Ex. xxix. 11*; *Lev. iv. 4*);

* It appears hardly necessary to point out the bearing of the commands for the immediate removal and destruction by fire of animal refuse on the health of the people.

It is nevertheless a fact that our present practice is directly the reverse of that commanded by the Jewish lawgiver. The sanitary code of the Old Testament commands the removal from human habitations of offal, merely because it is offal. The law takes it for granted that the retention of it would be injurious to the people. With us, on the contrary, the law permits any man not only to keep refuse organic matter of all kinds near his own dwelling and those of his neighbours, but he may proceed to make such refuse an article of profitable manufacture. He may boil bones, make cat-gut, or artificial manure, manufacture animal oils, or, indeed, anything he thinks fit whereby he can make money, provided he does not commit what the law calls a nuisance; and if he should even do so, the legal remedy is so expensive and difficult, that 99 nuisances in 100 escape punishment altogether. Moreover, the law takes no cognizance of the fact, that before any putrescent refuse or unwholesome manufacture occasions, what would be considered, a nuisance in law, it may have already undermined the health of the whole neighbourhood from which the complaint proceeds.

The Jewish legislator struck at the root of the whole difficulty when he commanded the removal of all refuse from the vicinity of human habitations without any question as to its being injurious or not; at the same time investing the command with a religious sanction. It can never be said that proper attention is paid to the health and habits of our working population until our sanitary police has arrived at such perfection as to ensure the removal of all animal and vegetable refuse from our towns *as soon as such refuse is produced*.

The altar on which the sacrifices were to be burned was to be in a similar situation (*Lev. i. 5*);

The refuse of the slain animals was to be burned “without the camp” (*Ex. xxix 14; Lev. iv. 11, 12; vii. 8; viii. 17*);

The ashes of burnt offerings were to be carried to a clean place also “without the camp” (*Lev. vi. 11*);

Excreta of every kind were to be removed and, in general, to be buried, beyond the precincts of human habitation (*Deut. xxiii. 12 to 14*);*

* The burying of the excreta without the camp (prescribed in *Deut. xxiii. 12, 13*) has no reason given for it except the theocratic one in the 14th verse. The lawgiver does not enter into any scientific disquisition to show the propriety of what is ordered, but refers the command directly to the will of the Supreme, thereby in the highest degree sanctioning certain observances and their consequences, as depending on immutable laws. The form in which the command was given was the best for the then nomadic condition of the Hebrew people, and the value of it can be appreciated by those, who have spent any time in a large Arab encampment, where the command is not observed. One result is that if pestilence be abroad, those foul encampments are almost certain to suffer.

The principle contained in the command is obvious enough. It is that all excreta are to be removed immediately from human dwellings, and disposed of with safety and decency at a distance. Such a thing as the accumulation of excreta in cesspools, middensteads, &c., previous to removal, is not even contemplated. The immediate removal to a distance, where it will be innocuous, is precisely what modern science has proved to be absolutely necessary for health; and it is to this object that all engineering effort in the matter has to be directed. Modern experience is nothing more than a comment on those verses of the pentateuch. It has proved

1st. That the excreta cannot be retained in dwelling-houses without immediate danger to health.

2nd. That cesspools and middensteads are abominations, injurious to health and morals, which by saturating the subsoil of towns

The blood of the sacrifices was either to be poured at the foot of the altar (*Lev. iv. 7, 30*), whence it was conveyed

with filth have predisposed succeeding generations to attacks of pestilence, so much so that the sites of many towns have become "used up" in the course of ages, and are no longer habitable.

3rd. That large sewers and sewer-rivers, in which the excreta accumulate and ferment, instead of being carried rapidly to a distance, are no better than cesspools; while in addition, they infect the air of the public streets, and add to the unhealthiness of towns and dwellings.

Modern science has also shown that there are certain means of ensuring all the objects in view, and the mechanism of the human body itself gives the plan.

One great function of the vascular system is to supply fresh blood for the various organs, and to remove impurities. The arteries carry the pure fluid, the veins remove the impure fluid from the organs. Both sets of tubes are formed on the most accurate principles, and are exactly suited for the amount of fluid they have to convey; and if from any cause a vessel becomes dilated beyond its natural dimensions, serious disturbance is at once introduced into the system.

The internal economy of a town resembles the economy of the human body, and experience has shown the necessity for a gradual approximation in the engineering works of towns to a closer resemblance with the arterial and venous systems.

In the water supply, for instance, tubes are laid down with dimensions exactly calculated for the amount of fluid they have to convey. These tubes are divided and subdivided till every house has its ramification. The water supply is the arterial system of a town carrying the pure vital fluid to all its parts; but the sewerage, which is the venous system for the removal of the impure fluids of towns, has hitherto borne little resemblance to its prototype. There has not been the same calculation as to the amount of water to be carried away, and hence the sewerage has resembled varicose disease in the human frame, rather than healthy venous structure. There has been "*stagnation*" instead of "*circulation*," and disorder and disturbance have been introduced in the function of removal.

away by a covered drain ; * or to be covered with dust (*Lev.* xvii. 13) ;

No interment of the dead was permitted within the limits of the camp or city (*Lev.* x. 4) ;

And because uncleanness was occasioned by the touching of the dead bodies either of men (*Num.* xix. 11) or of animals (*Lev.* xi. 32, 39), the strictest attention was required for their being speedily burned or removed.†

Water is the great agent for carrying away the excreta, and hence the necessity of introducing water-closet arrangements, with an abundant supply of water, universally.

The water-closet is the beginning of the venous system of a town, and the whole system of tubes from that point to the final outlet should be exactly proportioned to their function of immediate removal, as water-pipes are for their function. This is possible. It can be done ; it has been done, and is now in operation in all classes of houses. What is wanted to fulfil all the requisite conditions, is simply the extension, in every locality, of works now in successful operation in a few. It is by these means that the immediate removal of excreta, before fermentation has commenced, can be effected most speedily and economically, and the great principle of cleanliness involved in the Mosaic precept, be most easily applied to towns.

* See Bishop Parker's Commentary, *Folio Edition*, vol. 1, p. 386.

† The doctrine of the uncleanness occasioned by contact of a dead body, contained in it the whole practice of burial as observed among the Jews. It involved speedy removal of the dead from among the living : their interment beyond the limits of the camp or city, and at a distance from human habitations : and as another result, it prevented the disturbance or exhumation of the dead when once interred. When we compare these obvious deductions from the Mosaic precept, with the actual practice of burial among the Jews everywhere, we find :—

1st. That the dead are removed from among the living at once in cases where from the poverty of the people suitable precautions

X. Care in avoidance of disease was rendered necessary by the penalties inflicted upon those who, by any means, rendered themselves ceremonially unclean.

“Every leper, every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead, both male and female shall be put

cannot be adopted in their dwellings to prevent contact with the body. The Jewish cemeteries generally contains the means of effecting this.

2nd. They bury only one body in a grave, which is never afterwards disturbed.

3rd. They always select their burial grounds at as great a distance as possible from habitations.

The governments of different European countries have for many years past had their attention more or less directed to the evils of intramural burial, which reached their height in the dark ages. The manifold abuses arising from the practice have also led to careful inquiry on the part of scientific men, and it is not a little remarkable that by this reflex process of arriving at truth, it has been discovered that the Hebrew practice is the only one consistent with a proper regard to public health and public decency.

What are called “reception houses” for the dead are in use over the North of Europe for the care of the dead away from the living in the interval between death and interment. The cemeteries have been removed away from the vicinity of human dwellings, and the fundamental principle observed in conducting interments is, that no more than one body should be buried in a grave.

These results have been arrived at after much consideration, and their necessity has been proved by experience.

It is gratifying to know that this country has adopted similar principles in its legislation, and that ere long intramural interment, with its accompanying abuses, will have disappeared from among us.

We have here another instance of results produced by the operation of a sound principle promulgated thirty-four centuries ago, having been found to be identical with the conclusions of modern inquiry and experience.

out without the camp, that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell" (*Lev. xiii.*; *Num. v. 1 to 4*).

XI. Considerable importance was attached in the Divine laws to the possession of separate houses (*Lev. xxvii. 14*; *Num. xxxii. 18*; *Deut. xx. 5, xxiv. 10*);

Also to a due attention to their construction (*Deut. xxii. 8*).

Great care, also, in respect to the cleanliness of houses was insisted upon. Wherever the plague of leprosy, or the spreading of fungi was observed upon the walls, the leprous stones and plaster were to be immediately removed and carried to an unclean place, and the walls to be repaired with new material. If the leprosy, after this, re-appeared, the house was condemned to be taken down; and all the materials of which it was composed were to be carried away to an unclean place beyond the precincts of the city* (*Lev. xiv. 33 to end*).

* The treatment prescribed for the leprosy of a house is a remarkable illustration of the union of religious rites with sound sanitary practice. The ceremonial uncleanness of everything stained or spotted is rigidly enforced, but, at the same time, the natural causation of the stains or spots is distinctly recognised, and appropriate means indicated for their removal.

Modern scientific inquiry and experience have amply confirmed the wisdom and efficacy of the Mosiac prescription.

Appearances analogous to those designated as the leprosy of a house are familiar to all sanitary observers, and they arise in the following manner:—When a house has been built in a locality where the air is constantly moist and loaded with putrescent matter, or where a house has been overcrowded and inhabited an undue length of time without the walls having been cleansed, the plaster becomes saturated with damp, and with organic matter proceeding from the condensation of moisture from the breath, &c., which is loaded with such matter. Whenever this takes place the house

From what I have now adduced it is evident that the Divine laws not merely recognized, but instituted and insisted upon a most wholesome system of sanitary regulations. The connexion of such a system with the sanctions and ceremonials of religion was necessary, indeed, to ensure its observance, under the circumstances in which the ancient Hebrews were placed; but the principles upon which it is founded have

becomes unhealthy, and the colour of the walls becomes changed. A greenish or reddish tint, apparently arising from the growth of minute lichens or fungi, appears in various places, and it is in houses, with the walls in this condition, that cholera and other epidemics usually select their earliest victims. We may hence appreciate the wisdom and mercy displayed in the direction that whenever a wall became stained or spotted the priest was to be sent for, who was thereupon to take certain prescribed steps; and the remarkable point is, that the very steps he was directed to take when the danger first showed itself, are the very same steps which modern experience has arrived at, with this important difference, however, that the Mosiac procedure arrested the mischief before human life had been sacrificed, while we put off interference until the danger has openly declared itself so as to excite alarm. The cohen, or priest, was directed to empty the house of everything, and shut it up for seven days. By this procedure the inhabitants were at once removed from the danger. At the end of the seven days the priest returned and examined the walls anew. If the appearance were confirmed he directed the removal of all the surface on which the spots had appeared even to the stones. The whole interior was to be scraped and the dust carried out of the city. The stones were then to be replaced and the house fresh plastered.

It is now an established fact in regard to epidemic diseases, especially cholera and fever, that washing the walls with quicklime is an almost certain means of arresting the progress of the disease. This very remedy, indeed, occupies a prominent place in the regulations of the General Board of Health directed against the spread of epidemics. The regulations likewise direct the removal of the people out of the houses. The frequent lime washing of common

their basis in the physical nature and constitution of man; and as the highest aims of spiritual life can only be attained by a due regard to the spiritual obligations of religion; and social happiness secured, only by a strict obedience to the moral law; so the connexion is immutable between a consistent observance of sanitary law and the fulfilment of the Divine promise, “God will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee, and take away from thee all sickness, and all

lodging-houses is also a most effectual preventive of fever. The practice of the Jewish cohen and the modern sanitary officer are thus identical in principle, although the Levite did his work more effectually; and moreover he was directed to take further steps if the leprosy were not cured by what he had previously done. He was in that case to break down the house, the mortar, the timber, and the very stones of it, and to carry them all out of the city into an unclean place. In our climate this destruction of property would not be requisite except in particular instances; but there can be no question of the supreme wisdom of dealing with the evil as soon as it was recognised, instead of waiting till human life is sacrificed to prove the necessity of interference.

It is no wonder that a people so carefully watched over, and who had their attention so constantly kept upon the prescriptions of their law, should have experienced so striking an immunity from pestilence.

A great amount of disease might be arrested in the present day if more care were bestowed on the condition of the interior walls of houses. Plaster and wall papers are all absorbent, and become saturated in time with those animal exhalations which engender pestilential disease. Frequent cleansing and washing with quick-lime is the great preventive measure. But modern science has even gone further, in pointing out that the true method of preventing the saturation of house walls is to line them inside with glazed tile, or glazed brick, or some other non-absorbent substance.

Internal cleansing as a means of preserving health includes the cleansing of furniture as well as walls, for the same animal effluvia deposit themselves everywhere in a house.

the diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest" (*Deut.* vii. 8 to 15).

But here a question of some importance to ourselves arises; viz., are the sanitary regulations prescribed to the Jewish Church abrogated in respect to the Christian? or, are they as binding upon the Christian as upon the Jew, and equally necessary to be observed, in order to secure the favor, and, so far as physical health is concerned, to realize the promises, of Almighty God?

To which I should reply, that due regard being had to the mere connexion of such regulations with ceremonials now abolished, or with typical indications of the Saviour's offices, and to the adaptation of such regulations to the peculiarities of climate, there is nothing in the Gospel dispensation which abrogates the sanitary system prescribed in the Mosaic institutions; but that, proceeding like the moral law from God himself, it is so far binding upon the Christian as upon the Jew, that neither the moral nor the sanitary law can be neglected without offence to Almighty God. Indeed, so great is the presumption in favour of such a deduction, that now, at the distance of considerably more than 3,000 years, after the laws, which I have here attempted to particularize, were introduced into the Divine code, the result of scientific investigation and national suffering is beginning to demonstrate that their observance is absolutely indispensable to the maintenance of physical health, and that they are now, as formerly, the only conditional preservatives against pestilence and disease.*

* The Jewish sanitary code is interwoven throughout the whole texture of their legislation. The great object of their inspired lawgiver appears to have been to develop a nation of free and religious men out of a slave caste, and, at the same time, to educate them into personal and domestic habits, such as would fit them for the duties of social life, and for the exercise of civil polity.

Their neglect may be inexcusable, but one advantage we certainly derive by discovering their importance from independent sources, after their observance has been so long in

This is done on the only principle on which such teaching has ever succeeded with the great mass of a people, namely,—by impressing upon them that the moral, physical, and religious laws which govern man's relations to the universe and its Creator are ordained by the same Great Being, and require to be acknowledged and obeyed as direct enunciations of the will of God. The Mosaic sanitary code must therefore be judged of as a whole, and in its relation to the other commanded duties, and also in relation to the climate; to the habits and customs of the Jewish people, while in a state of bondage in Egypt, and to that type of civilization which it was intended to impress on the nation when it took its place in the promised land.

It is when viewed in this manner, and not merely in its detached clauses and enactments, that the marvellous fitness of that code becomes apparent. An ignorant and recently enslaved people, wandering through the Arabian desert fifteen centuries before the Christian era, could not be expected to understand the physical reasons why certain articles of food should be rejected while others might be eaten with impunity; or why certain social and personal acts, often entailing much trouble and labour, required to be performed. And this is not to be wondered at, when nearly nineteen centuries after the Christian era we are slowly and labourously working out these very problems in order that all men may see their reasonableness, and may be led to acknowledge and obey natural laws which have as direct a bearing on the personal well-being of every human being, and as important an influence on civilization at the present time as they had when states were first founded. This was, no doubt, the reason why the didactic and authoratative method of teaching was adopted; and so completely did it succeed that the Jewish people escaped pestilence during the whole period of their national existence, except where it was directly inflicted for a special end, as on the occasion of the numbering of the people. Even till this present day they suffer less, in

abeyance, and that is, they add a most conclusive item to the long series of internal evidence, which proves the truthfulness and the divine origin of Holy Scripture. The Bible is indeed

proportion to their numbers, than any other race, except in certain special cases where the governments under which they live flagrantly neglect their duty.

A large volume might be written to show that the fundamental principles of all sanitary legislation and practice, whether national, domestic, or personal, are contained in the Old Testament. The principles to be observed in the selection of lands for settlements and cities, in constructing houses with the needful appliances for health, decency, and safety; for the immediate removal of refuse organic matter; for personal and domestic cleanliness; for clothing, food, and drink; all these are provided for, and only require to be applied to suit local circumstances in order to obtain immunity from pestilence for those who observe them.

Every city and town affords multitudes of instances of the neglect of the Old Testament sanitary principles, and of the corresponding disease, misery, and death which were originally denounced against their infraction nearly 3,400 years ago. Recent improvements have also afforded equally striking illustrations of the realization of the benefits promised to obedience to those precepts.

The model buildings erected in various parts of the metropolis have been constructed with reference to the observance of conditions necessary for health, and the result has been, that while over the whole population of the metropolis 22 persons in 1,000 died last year, 7 in 1,000 died in the improved buildings; and that while 46 out of every 1,000 children under ten years of age died in the same year in the metropolis, only 10 in 1,000 died in the metropolitan buildings.

If these results be compared with the mortality in the Potteries (mentioned page 12), it will be found, as the consequence of the infringement of every law of physical well-being for which that place is notorious, that no less than 40 in 1,000 of its inhabitants died last year, and that the deaths among children were in the ratio of 109 deaths out of every 1,000 children under ten years of age.

“the Book of Books;” for that which elevates the human spirit to the secret things of God, and disciplines the moral nature to a likeness to the Divine image, and addresses itself

While cholera ravaged the whole of the neighbourhoods in which the model dwellings are situated, it never passed their threshold. It appeared to have no mission within. There is the same immunity from typhus fever. In the words of Dr. Southwood Smith: “By enforcing scrupulous cleanliness we have for some time past banished this disease (typhus) from our union workhouses and from prisons; and now, by giving to the houses of the industrious classes efficient drainage, the ready means of removing solid refuse, a good supply of water, and water-closets instead of cesspools, we have placed a barrier around these dwellings which this mortal pest of our towns and cities has not been able to pass.”*

In a certain part of Lambeth, called Lambeth-square, the houses of which were so built that the excreta were retained under and around them, in imperfectly constructed drains, the deaths were 55 in 1,000 in a single year, chiefly from fevers. As soon as impervious self-cleansing drains were laid down, and the excreta removed immediately to a distance, the mortality fell to the rate of 13 in 1,000 per annum.

So true is it that godliness hath “the promise of the life that now is,” while that ungodliness which consists in the practical denial of the Creator’s physical laws is as certainly followed by “the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” and “the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.” Pestilence and premature death are in themselves mercies when compared with the inevitable moral degradation and physical debasement of a people which expects to reap the advantages of civilisation without conforming to the eternal laws of the universe; for unless the predisposed generation were swept away, it would give place to others in succession, more predisposed and debased, until the human race itself became ripe for extirpation.

* Results of Sanitary Improvement.

to the improvement of the physical constitution no less than the intellectual faculties of man, proves itself to have proceeded from the source of all knowledge and truth, and therefore that its origin is divine.

But if it be so, that with only such exceptions as I have described, the sanitary laws of the Old Testament are still binding upon the Christian, then it is evident that the due observance of such laws is an indispensable religious duty, and cannot be omitted by ourselves without the culpability of sin against our Heavenly Father. It may be said, indeed, that upon this subject all men have not knowledge; but what says St. Paul in respect to another subject upon which a like excuse may be adduced; "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (*Rom. ii. 12*). If our blessed Saviour came into this world, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, so far only as the objects of his divine mission was concerned (*Matt. v. 17, 18*); if in his own teaching and example he developed a system of love and of good works, which his disciples are ever bound, as a law, to obey (*St. John xv. 14*; *1 Cor. ix. 21*); and if the sanitary system of the Hebrews was not merely acted upon by our Lord himself and his inspired apostles, but, as it might be shown, was incidentally recognized and enforced under the Gospel dispensation;* then whatever be the ignorance of some men in respect to these things, we must maintain it to be the duty of those, who are better informed, to declare that the principles for human guidance which God has joined together no man may put asunder, and that it is one of the especial duties of a minister of Christ to insist on the religious obligation of sanitary laws.

But be the opinion what it may on the religious aspect of this question, no one, except the most ignorant person, will

* *Matt. xv. 32*; *Mark viii. 3*; *Acts xxvii. 34*; *Rom. xiii. 13*; *xiv. 2, 3*; *1 Cor. xi. 21, 22*; *1 Tim. ii. 9*; *iii. 12*; *1 Peter iv. 3 to 5*; &c.

doubt the expediency, particularly at the present time, of giving serious attention to sanitary regulations.

The avoidance of pestilential visitations is, I contend, brethren, mainly in your own hands; and therefore I urge you to consider how great inconsistency there is in respect to any recurrence of choleraic pestilence, and how contrary even to the Divine will, to look forward to the removal of such an affliction rather to some specific period of National Humiliation, than to your own diligence and exertions to obey the Sanitary Laws which God himself has instituted. In mercy and compassion our Heavenly Father may indeed stay his hand, for a season, at the humiliation and prayer of his faithful people, but if they desire permanent blessings, they must be wise and keep his commandments; they must arouse themselves to do his will, and then they may have hope, nay they may rely with the fullest assurance of faith, that no weapon formed against them shall prosper, and that no promise of protection made to the Jewish people shall fail in its accomplishment to the disciples of Jesus Christ.

The summary of the Sanitary Laws, which were Divinely instituted, is as follows;—

I. A careful avoidance of whatever can occasion uncleanness, either as respects the person or the place of habitation.

II. A due regard to the kinds, quality, and preparation of food.

III. An abundant use of water for cleansing the entire skin and the clothes also.

IV. Temperance in the use of every kind of drink liable to intoxicate.

V. Care to avoid physical exhaustion.

VI. Due attention to clothing, both for decency and warmth.

VII. The removal of excreta and of solid and fluid refuse beyond the limits of human habitation.

VIII. Strict regard to the extra-mural interment of the dead.

IX. Proper care in the construction and cleansing of houses.

X. The selection of separate residences for separate families, in healthful situations.

Let these laws be observed, while the spiritual and moral tone of feelings continues under the direction of the Christian faith, and the highest degree of health and happiness, of which human nature is susceptible, shall certainly be enjoyed.

A due regard to sanitary rule has indeed, as a physical result, the direct effect of warding off every disease, which science reckons as “preventable;” but when religion also regulates the mind and casts out fear, the human frame is strongly fortified against calamity. We know that the religious convictions of King David, nurtured only by the types and services of the Mosaic ritual, so elevated his spirit into the secret things of God, that it gave him confidence to declare, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty: I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress; he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee” (*Ps. xci.*). What then can hinder the Christian, taught as he is by “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (*2 Cor. iv. 6*), from attaining the like triumph, if he duly regard the Divine will; seeing he has the assurance of inspiration, that “Godliness hath promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come?” (*1 Tim. iv. 8.*)

Brethren, it may please God to visit us with some kind of pestilence during the present year; but whether he do so or not, let me earnestly commend to your serious perusal

the Old Testament Scriptures. There you will be able to compare the course we ordinarily pursue to protect the general or individual health, with the regulations for a like purpose instituted by Almighty God. The comparison is important; both because it will lead you to consider how far we may reasonably expect the Divine blessing upon our own proceedings; and also because it will help you to appreciate a recorded fact that during the visitation of cholera in 1848-9, the Jews in London, many of whom are of the very lowest class, “suffered much less from the disease of cholera than the other classes of the community; probably not more than thirteen deaths occurring out of a population of 20,000;”* and “this comparative immunity,” after an official investigation, could be accounted for, only by their partial observance of the Mosaic Institutions.

Search the Scriptures, then, for your guidance as to duty in these important matters. Your Heavenly Father has provided you with directions for the maintenance of your physical, no less than your spiritual health; nor can you be neglectful of the one, any more than of the other, without a culpable disregard of his Sacred will. Cleanliness of skin and clothes and habitation, though not themselves religion, are essential elements in the acceptable worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if, therefore, by the Divine blessing, you are led in the exercise of Christian faith, so to profit by the afflicting visitations we have already had, or may yet anticipate, as to adopt, as far as practicable, the suggestions and directions for your bodily health which the Word of God contains; happy will you be in such a case; the promise shall be fulfilled to you, that all “preventable diseases” shall be taken away; and so thoroughly

* Report of the General Board of Health on Asiatic Cholera, Appendix B, page 82.

shall you be convinced that every affliction, whether of the body or the spirit, is mercifully designed for your real good, that whatever be your future trials, this language of our text shall be at once the spontaneous expression and the devout support of your grateful heart:—"Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hands of man."

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